

Muhyiddin: No bullying under Article 153
The Malaysian Insider
December 27, 2011
By Shannon Teoh

SHAH ALAM, Dec 27 — Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin denied today that any community had been bullied as a result of Article 153 of the Constitution as claimed by a senior Christian leader last weekend.

The deputy prime minister told reporters that the clause, which charges the Agong with protecting the position of Bumiputeras, was "enshrined in the Constitution (because) there is history, there is a rationale".

"That is an incorrect interpretation," the Umno deputy president said when asked to comment on National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) chairman Reverend Dr Eu Hong Seng's claim that Article 153 was akin to "bullying" if it only protected the rights of one group.

"The government's policies under Barisan Nasional (BN) have served all. Efforts to help all levels of society... are all sealed in the (social) contract that has been implemented all this while.

"I hope no debate is sparked for certain purposes. What is already enshrined in the constitution should not be questioned," the Pagoh MP said.

Perkasa had responded to Eu on Sunday by saying the Article helped keep the country peaceful, further claiming that the race riots of May 13, 1969 happened because it was not implemented properly.

"This country is peaceful because of Article 153 which protects the rights of Bumiputeras who are the majority in this country.

"The reverend needs to remember that Christians are able to practise their religion without worry in this country because of Article 153," Perkasa secretary-general Syed Hasan Syed Ali said.

Muhyiddin had also said yesterday no one was sidelined under BN due to the ruling coalition's power-sharing concept that is based on a common understanding among the various races and religions.

The Pagoh MP cited the RM2 billion to be handed out to all households earning less than RM3,000 a month under Budget 2012 as an example of "how we give equal treatment without looking at your background, race or religion."

Article 153 states that "it shall be the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak and the legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of this Article."

The provision in the Federal Constitution has been repeatedly invoked by Malay right-wing groups who insist on the continuance of pro-Bumiputera affirmative action.

These include quotas in education, scholarships, business equity and employment in the public sector.

But constitutional expert Prof Abdul Aziz Bari said on Sunday this meant “the King must also make sure that (safeguarding Bumiputeras) must not be done at the expense of the legitimate interests of other communities.”

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/muhyiddin-no-bullying-under-article-153/>